



Implementation Planner

Goals for Family Engagement

Clarify goals for family engagement. Work with staff to develop short and longer-term goals, and ensure that all work as a team to achieve them. For each goal, list the steps involved, person or people responsible, and the resources or materials needed.

Goals	Steps Involved	Who is Responsible	Resources Needed
Create a program space where all families feel welcome			
Ensure the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse families and students are met			
Help families gain access to the organizations, people, and resources they need to support their children and themselves			
Find innovative and differentiated ways to involve families that utilize their skills and address their concerns			
Help families find additional ways to be involved in their children's lives and support their healthy development			
Support better student behavior and academic performance in school and the program			
Other:			



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Knowing families and their cultures

Build the cultural competence of you staff by getting to know the cultures of program families. Examine the strategies below and personalize them for you particular situation.

Strategy	Personalization
Provide time in program orientation meetings at the beginning of the year for families to get to know one another and connect with staff.	
Find a way to understand parents' expectations regarding school.	
Clarify expectations for the academic aspect of your program.	
Create a policy for any cultural misunderstandings that might occur.	
Set aside program space for families to use to meet, talk, and support one another.	
Learn about families by talking to program youth.	
Plan projects that encourage youth to talk with family members about their culture, upbringing, and dreams for the future.	
Visit the neighborhoods, popular meeting places, and other important locations of your program families.	
Make families feel comfortable visiting and helping out with the program by consistently providing opportunities for them to do so.	
Learn about and honor the cultures of program families and youth.	
Do home visits if possible.	
Go to sporting events and music- and art-related performances for program youth.	
Create or improve your parent/family handbook.	
Gather information and feedback on your engagement efforts to revise accordingly.	
Find big (family nights, program orientation, etc.) and small (phone calls, chatting with families when they pick up youth, etc.) ways to better know and understand families.	
Learn and teach words in other languages spoken by program families.	
Find translators and use translated materials whenever necessary.	
Other	



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Understanding and overcoming challenges to family engagement

Use this tool to explore common family engagement challenges, possible underlying causes, and potential solutions. The first few have been filled in, the others are blank to generate staff discussion.

Challenges	Possible underlying causes	Potential solutions
Forms sent home to be signed are never returned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youth misplaces the form. - Youth forgets to show it to family. - Families don't understand the form. - Family members work in the afternoon and evening and don't see youth until they are asleep. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a folder for important forms. - Choose one day a week for important forms to go home so families know when to look for them. - Translate the form into the appropriate languages and go over the form with youth so they can explain them to their family members. - Send forms electronically or through the mail.
Only a few families attend open houses or other meetings related to the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Families don't have easy access to transportation to the program site. - Family members can't get time off from their jobs. - Family members don't have people to look after their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinating around bus schedules, providing transportation and having your event at a more central location are all ways to increase attendance. - Plan events on weekends or repeat the event on different days and at different times to allow more families to attend. - Provide free childcare and dinner if budget allows.
Families never answer our phone calls and don't return them when we leave messages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Families phone numbers may have changed or been disconnected. - Families may not be able to reach you during the day because of work or family obligations. - Families may not speak English well enough to carry on a phone conversation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get updated contact information throughout the course of year and use other communication methods (email, regular mail, etc.). - At the beginning of the year, let families know when you can be reached. - Use an interpreter to talk for you or learn enough of their home language to ask them to come in for a visit.



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Challenges	Possible underlying causes	Potential solutions
Family members don't come into the building when they pick up their children		
Families don't take the program seriously. They just view us as babysitters.		
Families have had bad past experiences in schools and are reluctant to get involved.		
Families don't know how to help their children with homework.		
OTHER		



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Supporting and involving families

Successful family engagement requires constant efforts in engage, support, and involves families in your program.

Examine the strategies below and personalize them for your particular situation.

Strategy	Personalization
Develop their own skills and talents	
Provide information on adult literacy, GED, and ESL classes in the community.	
Conduct a job skills or resume-writing event for parents who are out of work.	
Conduct parenting classes, or connect parents to classes in the community.	
Engage in fun and educational activities with their children	
Plan and implement family events several times a year.	
Remind families about the importance of family engagement by sharing research on how it improves youth's academic and life outcomes.	
Involve families in projects and special events.	
Find innovative and engaging ways to get to know your program families.	
Incorporate program youth into designing and providing different engagement opportunities.	
Participate in running out-of-school time programs	
Invite parents to become members of your advisory committee	
Create a program "Family Handbook" which clearly welcomes families and offers them ways to get involved.	
Connect with schools and with community resources	
Think of your program as a hub where families can share ideas and resources, seek out support, and problem solve with other families or staff.	
Go off-site! Visit families at places of worship, popular meeting places, and their homes.	



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Strategy	Personalization
Create a space at your site for families to network, talk to staff members, and connect with community resources.	
OTHER	